

HANDHELDS

FAQ

Q I love my smartphone's web and email features, but the battery doesn't last as long as a normal phone's. How can I prolong its battery life?

A There are several steps you can take. Wireless data connections such as 802.11b/g and Bluetooth are a drain on the battery. 802.11b/g is especially bad, as even when you're not connected to a network the phone will send out radio signals as it searches for networks. Disabling wireless options when you don't need them will significantly improve your battery life. A 3G data connection is also a drain, so you should set your 3G to connect only when needed.

You should also look at your phone's screen backlight settings. Setting your backlight to turn off after a short period will also help your battery. If you're going to be away from a socket for a long time, consider a phone with an extra high-capacity battery, such as Samsung's i600 (above).

Chris Fynamore

Components and handhelds expert

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SAMSUNG i600

★★★★★

Free on £35 per month contract

Manufacturers are queuing up to take a slice of the BlackBerry's market share. Samsung's i600 is a Windows Mobile smartphone with a built-in QWERTY keyboard that can do what a BlackBerry can, and more besides. We reviewed the Orange-branded version of the phone.

The i600 is aimed primarily at business users. It's not as compact or pretty as Orange's SPV E600, but it feels built to last. The phone feels strong and doesn't flex or creak, while the directional keypad and main shortcut buttons are large and easy to press. The phone has a soft plastic back, but the angular edges mean it's not particularly comfortable to hold.

The i600's keyboard is well designed. The keys are fairly small, but they're spaced far apart. This makes it simple to type with your thumbs and hard to hit two keys at once. The number keys are grey, so it's easy to spot them for dialling. The phone uses the smartphone edition of Windows Mobile 5, so there's no stylus.

The main menu consists of large icons, while sub-menus are arranged in numbered lists. You can either scroll through the options using the directional keypad, or use the thumbwheel on the side. The software runs smoothly, with only occasional pauses.

Orange has customised the Windows Mobile home screen with its own menu system, which we found made it quicker to launch common applications such as contacts, calendar and the call manager. Strangely, the network has removed MSN Messenger,



which comes as standard on the SIM-free version of the phone. Orange does include an extra high-capacity battery, though, which makes the phone a bit fatter but provides plenty more charge. The phone also comes with a separate battery charger, so you can keep one battery on charge while using the other.

The i600 has built-in wireless networking, 3G data and ultra-fast HSDPA. Its web browser isn't as powerful as the PDA smartphone version of Pocket Internet Explorer, but it's fine for displaying mobile-optimised web pages and makes a reasonable job of fitting full web pages on the screen. The email client can connect to POP3 and IMAP servers, and you can synchronise your email, contacts, calendar and tasks with a Microsoft Exchange server over the phone's data connection. If enabled on your Exchange server, you can also get push email.

Unlike many phones running the smartphone version of Windows Mobile 5, the i600 can view Word, Excel and PowerPoint and PDF files with its Pictsel

Viewer program. This is quick and powerful. It can zoom in and out, so you can zoom out for an overview and gradually zoom in to make the document legible.

Orange's Samsung i600 isn't as powerful as Windows Mobile PDA smartphones such as HTC's Touch or T-Mobile's MDA Vario II, but it's well made, good value and great for email. It's also a proper BlackBerry rival, as long as you have access to an Exchange server with Direct Push email enabled.

Chris Fynamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Well made
- ✓ Good keyboard
- ✗ Not the best web browser

SMARTPHONE Windows Mobile 5 operating system, Tri-band, 3G, HSDPA, 320x240 pixel LCD, 40MB internal storage, microSD card slot, USB, Bluetooth, 802.11b/g, 1.3-megapixel camera, 59x12x113mm, 105g
PART CODE SGH-i600
SUPPLIER www.mobiles.co.uk
DETAILS www.samsung.com/uk

Also consider...

TOMTOM One Regional

★★★★★

£150 inc VAT

BEST BUY TomTom's One Regional is a good-

value GPS system with UK and Ireland maps. It's easy to use, comes with a touch screen and has big icons that you can operate with your finger. Navigation is accurate and the voice prompts are clear. It's the best-value standalone GPS we've seen.



STANDALONE GPS 3.1in 320x240 resolution display, integrated SiRFstar III receiver, TomTom Navigator software, Navteq UK and Ireland maps, 1GB SD card, 174g PART CODE 5N00.110 SUPPLIER www.thenavigationcompany.com DETAILS www.tomtom.com
✓ Fast software; easy to use FULL REVIEW Mar 2007

SONY ERICSSON K800i

★★★★★

£196 inc VAT SIM-free; free on £25-per-month contract

BEST BUY The K800i is Sony Ericsson's first 3-megapixel camera phone. The phone's camera focuses more quickly than any camera phone we have seen and it's even possible to capture action shots with the BestPic mode. There's also a proper flash, so shots taken in darkness are properly illuminated. The photos have little noise and are fine for 6x4in prints. Apart from a wobbly keypad, the phone is easy to use. This is the best camera phone available and it's good value on contract.



MOBILE PHONE Tri-band GSM, 3G, 240x320-resolution LCD, 64MB internal memory, Memory Stick Micro slot, USB, Bluetooth, 3-megapixel camera, 47x22x105mm, 115g
PART CODE K800i SUPPLIER Vodafone/Orange/T-Mobile/O2
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.co.uk ✓ Superb camera
✗ Uses Memory Stick Micro cards FULL REVIEW Dec 2006

HTC Touch

★★★★★

Free on £35 per month contract

HTC's Touch is the first Windows Mobile 6 smartphone we have seen. It's also HTC's attempt to pre-empt the launch of Apple's iPhone; like Apple's latest gadget, the Touch has a touchscreen interface.

The Touch is the best-looking Windows Mobile smartphone yet. It fits in the palm of your hand and is slimmer than most phones. It is almost all screen, with only a small directional keypad and tiny call answer and end buttons.

The phone runs Windows Mobile 6, but HTC has heavily customised the home screen. It's dominated by a clock, and there are large shortcut buttons for the local weather and a customisable application launcher. The Touch's main trick is its TouchFlow interface, which is designed to be used with just your finger. Running your finger across the screen from bottom to top launches TouchFlow. The first screen has large icons for music, photos and videos. Running your finger from left to right rotates to display your contacts. Doing this again shows an application launcher, with shortcuts to messaging, the web, calendar and tasks.

The TouchFlow interface works beautifully and means you don't have to use the stylus for common tasks, but it doesn't go far enough. TouchFlow icons launch the standard Windows Mobile applications, most of which aren't finger-friendly. The Calendar application's buttons are too small for finger operation, and the keys on the onscreen keyboard are far too small to



press without the stylus. It's a shame that HTC didn't include its own keyboard application with larger keys.

TouchFlow does bring some improvements to the standard applications. Scrolling through lists of contacts, web pages or documents is easier than using the standard scroll bars. You can put your finger anywhere on the screen and flick it to start scrolling and tap the screen to stop it. The TouchFlow interface

appears to put a strain on the phone's resources, though, as Windows Mobile 6 runs fairly sluggishly.

The video playback application is a simple front end for Media Player, but the audio playback program is a big improvement. You can choose songs by artist, album and genre, and you don't need to use the stylus. The supplied headphones are clear but have little bass and a proprietary connector, so you can't use a different set.

The Touch uses Pocket Internet Explorer, which is a reasonable browser but fairly slow at loading complicated web pages. Setting up network

connections is simple thanks to the third-party wireless network manager. The phone takes data connection data from the SIM card, so setting up GPRS internet access is refreshingly simple. The phone doesn't support 3G data, unfortunately.

HTC's Touch is a gorgeous smartphone, and the TouchFlow interface is a big improvement. It's not perfect, though, and having to use the stylus for some inputs is annoying.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Looks great
- ✓ TouchFlow interface
- ✗ Operating system runs slowly

SMARTPHONE Windows Mobile 6 operating system, Tri-band, GSM, 240x320 resolution LCD, 25MB internal storage, 1GB microSD card, USB, Bluetooth, 802.11b/g, 2-megapixel camera, 58x14x100mm, 112g

PART CODE HTC P3450 UK
SUPPLIER www.expansys.com
DETAILS www.htc.com

CHOOSING A... Smartphone

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

STYLE: Handset
OPERATING SYSTEM: Windows Mobile 5.0
SCREEN: 240x320; 65,536 colours
INPUT: Keypad
CAMERA: 1.3 megapixel
BLUETOOTH: Yes
DATA CALLS: GPRS

Recommended minimum in grey

1 A smartphone's operating system – Palm OS, Windows Mobile or Symbian – dictates its basic features and what third-party software you can install. Windows Mobile 5.0 has the familiar look and feel of Windows, right down to a Start button, and is found on both handset- and PDA-style smartphones.

The only Palm OS smartphones available are Palm's Treo 650 and 680. There are four types of Symbian operating systems: series 60, 80, 90 and UIQ. Series 60, 80 and 90 are found on Nokia smartphones, while Sony Ericsson uses UIQ for its P900 smartphone series. Windows Mobile 5.0, Palm OS and Symbian all support third-party applications, and there is a vast amount of both freeware and commercial software available.

Symbian is often heavily customised by the phone's manufacturer and so may differ from phone to phone.

2 All smartphones come with a colour screen. A high-colour depth of 65,536 colours is important for viewing photos or video clips.

Users navigate and input information into a handset type of smartphone using the keypad and buttons or a jog dial. PDA-style smartphones usually have a touch screen, and both Windows Mobile and Palm have handwriting recognition features as well as onscreen keyboards. A few have a built-in QWERTY keyboard.

3 Cameras are common in smartphones. Resolution is limited, with three megapixels being the best you'll get. However, as most images will be viewed only onscreen or sent as video messages, this shouldn't be a problem for most people.

4 Bluetooth makes it easier to link your phone to a PC for synchronisation or wireless web access. For internet access, a GPRS or 3G mobile contract is essential. Data is usually billed per megabyte downloaded, but if you sign up for a data bundle when buying your smartphone it will work out cheaper.

ARCHOS 404 Camcorder

★★★★★

£200 inc VAT

Archos's 404 Camcorder is a portable media player (PMP) with a built-in digital video camera. It

plays most popular video and audio file types. The interface can be confusing at first, but getting compatible content on to the player is easy using Windows Media Player 10 or 11. The 404 has mediocre battery life and comes without a mains charger, but it's good value.

PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYER 3½in, 320x240-pixel LCD, 30GB hard disk, plays MPEG4, H.264, MPEG2, WMV video (all up to DVD resolution), plays MP3, WMA, Protected WMA, Wav audio, 8 hours' music playback, 2½ hours' video playback, 100x78x15mm, 190g **PART CODE** Archos 404 CAM 30GB **SUPPLIER** www.argos.co.uk **DETAILS** www.archos.com

✓ Comprehensive file support ✗ Mediocre battery life
FULL REVIEW May 2007



NAVICORE Personal 2007 Multiplatform package

★★★★★

£100 inc VAT

PRICE CUT!



Navicore Personal 2007 is a GPS navigation package for the Symbian operating system. The software mirrors the interface of whichever smartphone you install it on, so is easy to use. The navigation display and voice prompts are also clear, and there's a built-in speed camera database. It's a fast and comprehensive GPS.



GPS KIT Symbian Series 60, Series 80, UIQ compatible, Bluetooth SIRFstar III receiver, Navicore 2007 software, TeleAtlas UK and Ireland maps **SUPPLIER** www.mobilefun.co.uk **DETAILS** www.navicoretech.com ✓ Clear display; fast software
FULL REVIEW Mar 2007